REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application. Claim 1 has been amended to delete limitations and Claim 14 has been amended to incorporate one of these deleted limitations, all without the introduction of any new matter.

In reviewing the Amendment filed October November 4, 2004, Applicants have determined that Claim 1 as presented therein was unduly restricted in terms of the final three limitations appearing at lines 9-15 thereof. Accordingly, these limitations are deleted by the present amendment with the deleted limitation of lines 9-10 being further incorporated into Claim 14 introduced in the last Amendment.

In view of these changes, the brief review of the present invention presented In view of these changes, the brief review of the present invention presented in the paragraph briging pages 7 and 8 is no longer applicable and is superceded by the following brief review. In this regard, the present invention includes a gaming apparatus with a variable display unit that will variably display a plurality of symbols that is covered by a front side display unit that provides a display of a prescribed while permitting viewing of the symbols displayed by the variable display unit. A concealing unit is also included between the variable display unit and the front side display unit. The concealing unit is configured to temporarily conceal the symbols displayed by the variable display unit during a progression of a game.

Similarly, the argument as to the outstanding rejection over Loose in view of Shuster must also be modified as follows in view of these supplemental claim changes.

Accordingly , the rejection over Loose in view of Shuste is now traversed because these references considered alone or together in any proper combination fail to teach or suggest all the subject matter of base independent Claim 1 including, *inter alia*,

> a front side display unit, which is located in front of the variable display unit, configured to display a prescribed image and to enable viewing of the symbols displayed by the variable display unit;
>
> a concealing unit located between the variable display unit and the front side display unit and configured to temporarily conceal the display of the variable display unit during a progression of a game.

Neither Loose nor Shuster teach or suggest a front side display located in front of the variable display that displays a prescribed image or a concealing unit that is located between the variable display unit and the front side display unit and that will temporarily conceal the symbols displayed by the variable display unit during a progression of a game.

The outstanding Action points to 16 as the element of Loose corresponding to the "front side display unit." However, 16 is simply a display area of video display image 18 as noted in paragraph [0012]. The teaching as to video display image18 in paragraph [0014] is that this display image can be provided as a direct image by using a flat panel transmissive liquid crystal display (LCD) 14a that is in front of reels 12 (a-c). Thus, 16 simply indicates a display area for the display of a video image 18 and 14a indicates one particular type of video display for providing the same video image 18. Therefore, 14a cannot be said to be taught or suggested to be the claimed concealing unit that is "located between the variable display unit and the front side display unit and configured to temporarily conceal the display of the variable display unit during a progression of a game." To whatever extent paragraph [0025]-[0026] suggest adjusting transparency of the video image 18, the separate shade embodiment is only used for a bonus game, not for a basic slot game, to block out the reels. This bonus game shade blocking of the reels is separate from 14a, not a part thereof as apparently suggested in the outstanding Action.

Accordingly, it is believed that the outstanding rejection applied to base independent Claim 1 is clearly improper and should be withdrawn because no *prima facie* case of obviousness has been established. See MPEP §2143 that establishes that a basic requirement

for a *prima facie* case of obviousness is that the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations.

Furthermore, as Claims 2-8 all ultimately depend from base independent Claim 1 and, thus, include all the limitations thereof, it is believed that the outstanding rejection as applied to Claims 2-8 is also clearly improper for the reasons noted above as to base independent Claim 1 and should also be withdrawn.

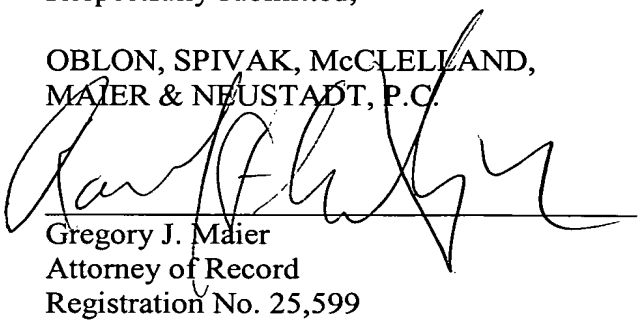
In addition, Claims 2-8 also add limitations to those of Claim 1 that are further not taught or suggested by the applied references considered alone or together in any proper combination. For example, note the plurality of stoppers required by Claim 8. Consequently, the outstanding rejection as applied to Claims 2-8 is also clearly improper for this reason as well as for the reasons noted above as to base independent Claim 1.

Furthermore, each of new Claims 9-14 all ultimately depend from base independent Claim 1 and, thus, include all the limitations thereof and add further limitations thereto not taught or suggested by the references noted above. Accordingly, the outstanding rejection as applied to Claims 1-8 is also clearly not applicable to the subject matter of these new claims for the reasons noted above as to base independent Claim 1 and because of these added limitations.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present supplemental amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Gregory J. Maier
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 25,599

Raymond F. Cardillo, Jr.
Registration No. 40,440

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 08/03)